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that ought to go with natural expression, and water of tears of the vexation which attends, not only teachers, but also sincere students who try to learn the difficult mechanism of English writing.

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BISMARCK, N.D.

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### THE PLAY PRODUCER'S NOTEBOOK

PLAY: *The Merchant Gentleman*. TYPE: Comedy of Manners. AUTHOR: Molière. TRANSLATOR: Margaret Baker. From the French of Molière's *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*.

PUBLISHER: Samuel French, 28 West 38th Street, New York, N.Y. PRICE: 50 cents.

CHARACTERS: Thirteen male, four female, musicians and dancers.

SCENE: One interior.

PERIOD: Time of Louis XIV of France.

THEME: "A lesson in good sense to those who suffer from the social ambition to rise above their proper rank."—EDWARD DOWDEN.

#### PRODUCTION:

*Professional*—In the original the play was written for the court of Louis XIV and first presented on October 14, 1670, at the royal château of Chambord, Molière taking the part of M. Jourdain, and his wife the part of Lucile.

*Amateur*—(1) By the Senior class of the State University Preparatory School, Tonkawa, Oklahoma, 1911; (2) by the Senior class of Bowen High School, Chicago, 1913; (3) by the Senior class of Parker High School, Chicago, 1916.

#### REQUIREMENTS:

*Stage*—A showy and pretentious drawing-room of a Parisian merchant in the time of Louis XIV. The walls and furniture should be distinctively of the period presented and should have some claim to the artistic. Moreover, a certain harmony in color scheme with the costumes of the leading actors should be observed.

*Costume*—The picturesque dress of the period of Louis XIV. Everything should be true to the period, consistent and artistic. It is best to put this in the hands of a first-class costumer, and rent costumes for the whole cast. The Master of Philosophy should wear the academic cap and gown; the fencing-master may use some outfit from the gymnasium. All the rest should be provided for by the costumer. The costumes for the singers should be those of shepherd and shepherdess; those of the dancers should be determined by the character of the dance.

*Characters*—M. Jourdain is the central character on the stage most of the time. This personality should be pleasing; a certain innocence and unsophisticated sincerity make him please his audience, even when he is duped and made a fool of by the clever Dorante and Covièlle. Dorante should have poise, subtlety, cleverness, and gallantry. Cleonte should be boyish, handsome, and romantic; Covièlle keen, shrewd, comical. Madame Jourdain, a strong personality, forceful, sarcastic, carries things with a high hand. Dorimène: gracious, aristocratic, elegant. Lucile: gentle, pretty, soft-voiced, lovable. Nicole: petite, saucy, with sense of humor. Philosopher: heavy in manner, slow of speech, pompous. Music-master and dancing-master: polished in manners, servile to M. Jourdain, with subtle irony beneath the surface. Fencing-master: self-assertive, confident, impudent, a heavy blusterer.

*Expense*—Total cost of production: costumes for fifteen actors and for the men in the Turkish drill about \$50.00 (of course, with some work, this cost can be lessened); make-up material; scenery; programs.

**COMMENT:** The play makes a very direct and strong appeal to high-school pupils. The fun is wholesome, with an element of frolic in it. The production should be characterized by grace, ease, delicacy, and a certain elegance; and yet should have an atmosphere of fun and playfulness. The singing, dancing, fencing, and the picturesque yet comical Turkish drill add much life and movement to the play and please the audience. The songs can readily be set to music adapted to the voices of the singers. In place of singing, instrumental music may be used.

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### A WORD ON SPELLING

My friend, the "magician," asserts that there is comparatively little trouble in memorizing a list of five hundred names of articles that can be carried on the person. Therefore, when he takes one of these articles from the various individuals in his audience and gives the right signal to his blindfolded confederate on the stage, she can reply almost immediately that he holds in his hand a handkerchief, a watch, a quarter, or whatever the object may be.

Now, if a high-school student has a vocabulary of fifteen hundred words, certainly five hundred is a large proportion to be mistaken about. In a test given last year at the West High School we discovered that the Freshmen misspelled 20 per cent of the words, the Sophomores and Juniors much fewer, and the Seniors, less than 10 per cent. In tests given this year only half of the Freshmen misspelled as many as 20 per cent of the words pronounced, and Seniors missed only 7 per cent, on the